

We Claim:

1. A computer-implemented method for displaying a set of items on a graphical user interface according to a common attribute of each item of the set, wherein the attribute can be ordered, comprising:

determining an ordering interval of the set of items;
dividing the set of items into a plurality of ordered groups based on the ordering interval and the attribute;
determining a focal group from the plurality of ordered groups;
displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface;
displaying on the graphical user interface with less prominence than the focal group on a first side of the focal group, at least one group that precedes the focal group ; and
displaying on the graphical user interface with less prominence than the focal group on a second side of the focal group, at least one group that succeeds the focal group..

2. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the first side of the focal group is one of a left side and a right side of the focal group, and the second side of the focal group is the other of said left side and right side.

3. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the first side of the focal group is one of a top side and a bottom side of the focal group, and the second side of the focal group is the other of said top side and said bottom side.

4. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the set of items represent graphical image files.

5. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the attribute corresponds to when each item was created.

6. The computer implemented method of claim 5, wherein the attribute corresponds to a date a picture was taken.

7. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the objects in the graphical user interface are rendered in 3D on a display device.

8. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the graphical user interface simulates 3D in a 2D graphical environment, as displayed on a display device.

9. The computer implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving user input selecting an item from a non-focal group;
determining the non-focal group from which the item was selected to be a new focal group instead of the original focal group;
transitioning the graphical user interface to display the new focal group at the point of primary focus of the graphical user interface, to display, with less prominence than the new focal group, at least one group that precedes the new focal group, on the first side of the new focal group, and to display, with less prominence than the new focal group, at least one group that succeeds the new focal group, on the second side of the new focal group.

10. The computer implemented method of claim 9, wherein the transitioning step comprises animating the graphical user interface to move the ordered groups.

11. The computer implemented method of claim 1, further comprising:
displaying a histogram indicating a range within which the ordered groups fall, based on the attribute on which the ordered groups are ordered,
wherein upon receiving user input selecting an interval on the histogram, a new focal group is determined based on the selected interval, and displaying the new focal group at the point of primary focus corresponding to the selected interval.

12. The computer implemented method of claim 11, where each interval of the histogram comprises an indicator of a number of items falling within that interval.

13. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the step of displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface comprises sizing the focal group to consume a predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

14. The computer implemented method of claim 13, wherein the predetermine amount comprises a range of approximately fifty to seventy percent of a width of the graphical user interface.

15. The computer implemented method of claim 13, wherein the step of displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface comprises sizing items of the focal group such that all the items fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

16. The computer implemented method of claim 13 further comprising:
determining whether all the items fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space when each icon has a predetermined minimum size;
dividing the focal group into a plurality of sub groups and displaying a first subgroup of the plurality of subgroups as the focal group if the icons do not fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

17. The computer implemented method of claim 16, wherein the predetermined minimum size is pixel-based.

18. The computer implemented method of claim 17, wherein the predetermined minimum size comprises 24 pixels by 24 pixels on a 96 dots per inch (dpi) display device, or a substantially equivalent size on a non-96 dpi display device.

19. The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein displaying on the graphical user interface at least one group that precedes the focal group comprises displaying the at least one group that precedes the focal group to appear receding backwards from the focal group.

20. The computer implemented method of claim 1 further comprising displaying on the graphical user interface a jog control which, when moved, causes the ordered groups to shift correspondingly with the jog control causing the focal group to become a new non-focal group and a non-focal group to become a new focal group.

21. A computer readable medium comprising computer executable instructions that cause a computer to perform a method for displaying a set of items on a graphical user interface according to a common attribute of each item of the set, wherein the attribute can be ordered, comprising:

determining an ordering interval of the set of items;

dividing the set of items into a plurality of ordered groups based on the ordering interval and the attribute;

determining a focal group from the plurality of ordered groups;

displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface;

displaying on the graphical user interface with less prominence than the focal group on a first side of the focal group, at least one group that precedes the focal group ; and

displaying on the graphical user interface with less prominence than the focal group on a second side of the focal group, at least one group that succeeds the focal group..

22. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the first side of the focal group is one of a left side and a right side of the focal group, and the second side of the focal group is the other of said left side and right side.

23. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the first side of the focal group is one of a top side and a bottom side of the focal group, and the second side of the focal group is the other of said top side and said bottom side.

24. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the set of items represent graphical image files.

25. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the attribute corresponds to when each item was created.

26. The computer readable medium of claim 25, wherein the attribute corresponds to a date a picture was taken.

27. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the objects in the graphical user interface are rendered in 3D on a display device.

28. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the graphical user interface simulates 3D in a 2D graphical environment, as displayed on a display device.

29. The computer readable medium of claim 21, the method further comprising: receiving user input selecting an item from a non-focal group;

determining the non-focal group from which the item was selected to be a new focal group instead of the original focal group;

transitioning the graphical user interface to display the new focal group at the point of primary focus of the graphical user interface, to display, with less prominence than the new focal group, at least one group that precedes the new focal group, on the first side of the new focal group, and to display, with less prominence than the new focal group, at least one group that succeeds the new focal group, on the second side of the new focal group.

30. The computer readable medium of claim 29, wherein the transitioning step comprises animating the graphical user interface to move the ordered groups.

31. The computer readable medium of claim 21, the method further comprising:
displaying a histogram indicating a range within which the ordered groups fall, based on the attribute on which the ordered groups are ordered,

wherein upon receiving user input selecting an interval on the histogram, a new focal group is determined based on the selected interval, and displaying the new focal group at the point of primary focus corresponding to the selected interval.

32. The computer readable medium of claim 31, where each interval of the histogram comprises an indicator of a number of items falling within that interval.

33. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the step of displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface comprises sizing the focal group to consume a predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

34. The computer readable medium of claim 33, wherein the predetermined amount comprises a range of fifty to seventy percent of a width of the graphical user interface.

35. The computer readable medium of claim 33, wherein the step of displaying the focal group at a point of primary focus of the graphical user interface comprises sizing items of the focal group such that all the items fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

36. The computer readable medium of claim 33, the method further comprising:
determining whether all the items fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space when each icon has a predetermined minimum size;
dividing the focal group into a plurality of sub groups and displaying a first subgroup of the plurality of subgroups as the focal group if the icons do not fit within the predetermined amount of the graphical user interface space.

37. The computer readable medium of claim 36, wherein the predetermined minimum size is pixel-based.

38. The computer readable medium of claim 37, wherein the predetermined minimum size comprises 24 pixels by 24 pixels on a 96 dots per inch (dpi) display device, or a substantially equivalent size on a non-96 dpi display device.

39. The computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein displaying on the graphical user interface at least one group that precedes the focal group comprises displaying the at least one group that precedes the focal group to appear receding backwards from the focal group.

40. The computer readable medium of claim 21 further comprising displaying on the graphical user interface a jog control which, when moved, causes the ordered groups to shift correspondingly with the jog control causing the focal group to become a new non-focal group and a non-focal group to become a new focal group.

41. A computer-generated user interface for displaying items comprising:
a first set of items comprising a focal group;
a plurality of sets of items related to the first set of items comprising a plurality of non-focal groups positioned in such a way as to appear less prominent than the focal group;
wherein the focal group and the plurality of non-focal groups are positioned according to an ordering attribute that exists in the focal group and the non-focal groups.

42. The computer generated user interface of claim 41 further comprising:
a jog control which when moved to a side causes the focal group to become a non-focal group and a non-focal group to become a focal group.

43. A method for displaying a plurality of items on a graphical user interface, comprising:
- organizing the plurality of items into groups of two-dimensional arrays based on time;
 - and
 - displaying at least a plurality of the groups on the graphical user interface with differing prominence based on a selected group.